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Ad-Hoc P25 Meetings Address CAP Conformance Debate

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By [Sandra Wendelken, Editor](#)

The Project 25 (P25) Steering Committee and APCO P25 Interface Committee (APIC) called an ad-hoc meeting in Boulder, Colo., this week to discuss testing procedures for the Inter RF Subsystem Interface (ISSI) and other standards. P25 vendors have suggested scaling back some of the testing included under the recently launched Compliance Assessment Program (CAP).

Specifically at issue is whether one of the three parts of the CAP tests — conformance — should be scaled back to avoid redundancies in vendor time and money. The CAP intends to conduct tests for performance, which ensures a radio doesn't interfere with another radio, for example; interoperability, which confirms whether product implementation A works with implementation B; and conformance, which confirms that the messaging complies with the specific protocols as defined by the standard.

Meeting participants will discuss what criteria should be used to determine the conformance tests that will be included in CAP and which, if any, can be validated through other testing mechanisms. In the latest P25 compliance assessment bulletin (CAB) related to the ISSI testing requirements, 32 of the 91 published conformance tests are included. The draft [document](#) was released for review Sept. 18.

Representatives from suppliers in the industry say some conformance tests are included in the product development

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process and interoperability tests and don't need to be repeated under the CAP program. "Conformance testing is very expensive and is part of our product development process," said Paul May, manager of system marketing for Harris Public Safety and Professional Communications. "The issue is whether we need to do conformance testing on a repeated basis as the product matures and as we develop additional functionality and rewrite parts of the software to fix bugs. It's a very expensive level of testing."

The meetings this week aim to discuss the various positions — vendor, public-safety user and P25 steering committee — and come to some resolution, said Craig Jorgensen, P25 steering committee co-chair. "The issue is to get a better understanding of what needs to take place," he said. "The steering committee hasn't arrived at a decision as to where that line is, because we think both sides need to be heard and their positions known, including us."

"Within the DHS P25 CAP, we see interoperability testing as addressing the highest priority for achieving customer satisfaction and confidence in P25 equipment," said Matthew Messinger, a Motorola spokesman. "The specific topic of ISSI conformance testing as it relates to compliance assessment testing is part of ongoing deliberations within APIC. Publicly discussing ongoing committee projects and working papers before completion is contrary to the standards deliberation process."

The National Public Safety Telecommunications Council (NPSTC) and Safecom executive committee last month passed [motions](#) calling on the P25 CAP to implement and enforce conformance tests. The [CAP program](#) formally got off the ground earlier this year when the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) recognized eight laboratories. The program currently only includes P25's Common Air Interface (CAI). Because the CAI doesn't yet have published conformance tests, conformance tests aren't part of the CAP CAI testing. However, the ISSI standard comprises 91 published conformance tests. ISSI-compliant networks will enable users to transmit digitally encrypted voice between multivendor systems, among other features. ISSI products are scheduled to be commercially available later this year or in early 2010.

The P25 meetings are being held at the Boulder Marriott Tuesday and Wednesday. Jorgensen said media representatives would not be allowed in the meetings.

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